

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 INR-07 MMO-01 ORM-02 DHA-02 SP-02

PM-04 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 IO-13 PRS-01 USIA-06

/054 W

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R 171015Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8960

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 2110

AF FOR DEP. ASST. SEC. BOLEN

CU/AF FOR DALSIMER

MBABANE FOR OSARAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, PINS, BC, SF

SUBJECT: EXTAFF SECRETARY ON REFUGEE PROBLEM

REF: A. GABORONE 2108; B. STATE 268054 (NOTAL)

C. STATE 118919

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON EXTAFF SECRETARY CHARLES TIBONE NOV. 16 TO OBTAIN COPY OF GOB PRESS RELEASE ON REFUGEE SITUATION (REF A). ENSUING DISCUSSION, INITIATED BY TIBONE, GAVE INICATION OF CONCERNS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEE PROBLEM WHICH PROMPTED GOB TO ISSUE THE RELEASE.

2. UNLIKE RHODESIANS IN FRANCISTOWN WHO ARE WELL CONTROLLED IN REFUGEE CAMP AND WHOSE NUMBERS ARE ROUGHLY STABLE AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE NUMBER OF YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS WHO HAVE COME TO BOTSWANA SINCE SOWETO HAS JUMPED SHARPLY. IN TIBONE'S OPINION, THE 500 SOWETO REFUGEES IN GABORONE ARE BECOMING A "SERIOUS
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SOCIAL PROBLEM". TIBONE SAID THAT "PRACTICALLY EVERY" GOB

OFFICIAL IN GABORONE HAS ONE OR MORE YOUNG SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES STAYING WITH THEM. ONCE A LOCAL PERSON VOLUNTEERS TO HOUSE ONE SUCH PERSON, THE REFUGEE BRINGS "FIVE OF SIX OF HIS FRIENDS THE NEXT NIGHT".

3. MORE SERIOUSLY, ONE REFUGEE RAPED A MOTSWANA GIRL RECENTLY AND ANOTHER WAS CAUGHT BURGLARIZING A HOME. TIBOEN FEARS THAT SUCH INCIDENTS WILL CAUSE POPULACE TO TURN AGAINST THE REFUGEES (PARA 2A, REF B). "GOVERNMENT IS IN A AVERY DELICATE POSITION", ACCORDING TO TIBONE, AND HAS CONDIERED VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING KEEPING ALL OF THESE PERSONS IN ONE VILLAGE OR BUILDING A REFUGEE CAMP SIMILAR TO THE ONE IN FRANCISTOWN.

4. ALTHOUGH UNCERTAIN WHAT TO DO NEXT, GOB FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THE TWENTY PULA PRE MONTH GIVEN TO EACH REFUGEE BY UNHCR TOTALLY INADQUATE. THUS, NOV. 16 PRESS RELEASE CALLED FOR ASSISTANCE FROM "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY". TIBONE SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH BOTSWANA HAS RECEIVED "SO MUCH ASSISTANCE, FROM SUG, GOB DESPERATE FOR HELP AND HOPES THAT WE WILL COME FORTH IN RESPONSE TO THIS APPEAL.

5. EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT PRE-SOWETO REFUGEE ASSISTANCE REVIEW (REF C) BE BROADENED TO INCLUDE SOUTH AFRICANS TAKING REFUGE IN BOTSWANA. SPECIFICALLY, WE HOPE USG CAN MAKE SOME ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE NOW RPT NOW TO HELP GOB WITH IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. AS NOTED PARA 7 REF A, GOB CONCERNS INCLUDE BOTH DIRECT AID FOR LOCAL MAINTENANCE AND INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS OUTSIDE OF BOTSWANA. IT IS CLEAR THAT GOB IS WORRIED ABOUT BOTH LOCAL DISRUPTIONS AND POSSIBLE BOTSWANA-SOUTH AFRICAN STRAINS CAUSED BY TROUBLESOME REFUGEES FROM FOWETO, WHOSE NUMBERS COULD BECOME VERY LARGE AND UNMANAGEABLE.

6. PLEASE ADVISE.
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04 MAY 2006

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